

- ☒ **Maj. Timothy S. Donnelly earns Bronze Star**
 (photo on back)
- ☒ **Sixth Marines return for quick turnaround (back)**
- ☒ **In 1911, 2nd Lt. Henry H. "Hap" Arnold soloed in a Wright Flyer after 2 ½ hours in the air and was awarded his wings after 3 hours and 48 minutes of flying.**

"Local" tests pilots' proficiency and precision with air refueling

Article and photos
 by SSgt. Andrew Biscoe

The weekly training missions that send the signature howl and roar of the Air Force's largest aircraft into the skies over western Massachusetts are planned each week to keep aircrews with the 337th Airlift Squadron proficient.

That means that the men and women of the squadron not only practice repeated touch-and-goes, they must take part in an air refueling mission. That's when they have to nestle a half a million pounds of C-5 underneath a KC-135 tanker.

On a recent rainy Thursday evening, an aircrew with a wealth of C-5 experience took to the skies for the "local" as it is known by anyone familiar with flight operations at Westover. Maj. Vito Addabbo flew in the right seat. His job as instructor pilot was to monitor the aircraft commander's handling of the aircraft. Aircraft commander for the flight was Maj. Bill Rolocut, who has flown C-5s through the 16 years the Galaxies have been assigned to Westover.

Another pair of experienced eyes were those of Lt. Col. Ken Riley, who flew in the jump seat as evaluator pilot. "Bill's getting a check ride," Riley said, "and I'm administering it." Riley has flown C-5s for 19 years. That kind of experience literally put him front and center with the entire operation of the night's mission. Riley sat in the seat in between the pilots.

"I know everything that's going on, however something new happens all of the time," he said. "We had an airplane divert into Cypress (recently) with a gear problem.

I've never seen that before."

Riley said his favorite aspect of flying C-5s was probably the space the Galaxy takes up in the air. "Maybe the size and comfort ... its stability - probably the best," he said. Pilots who fly the C-5 must have a minimum of a takeoff, landing and approach every month. Minimum requirements call for an air

refueling every month as well, Riley said.

The June mission began at about 7:30 p.m. "Rodd 99 heavy" was the call sign used. "Heavy" is used to alert other pilots that the biggest aircraft in America now rules the skies.

After Rodd 99 was cleared for takeoff, Rolocut and Addabbo circled the area and took the huge airlifter back home. They returned to fly a practice approach to Runway 23 at Westover.

"MINIMUM. MINIMUM," a human voice boomed in from the cockpit. The voice is activated electronically as the C-5 flies closer to the ground.

The huge General Electric turbofan engines roared as the aircraft approached Westover. Then, when it looked like the aircraft might land, the pilots banked the Galaxy to the left. Houses in Granby and Ludlow were easily visible below.

"Keep your eyes out and call my turn," Rolocut told Addabbo. Nothing happens in the cockpit without thorough checklists.



Maj. Vito Addabbo, instructor pilot with the 337th Airlift Squadron, runs through a final checklist while adjusting dials and controls in the cockpit.

There is constant conversation over the pilots' intercom system. The pilots set up for a low approach to Runway 33, the shorter runway.

The force of the engines - each rated at 41,000 pounds of thrust - pushed the pilots back in their seats. Rolocut took the C-5 into a climb. The mission was now on its way to meet up with "Pack 11," the call sign for the Pease Air Guard KC-135. They were scheduled to rendezvous over New Hampshire at about 24,000 feet.

The C-5 gained altitude while clouds and fog briefly obscured a view of the winding Connecticut River thousands of feet below. The Galaxy rose above the clouds and surged above 13,000 feet. The clouds and rain disappeared below, and the sun shone through the side of the cockpit.

Crew members ran through their pre-air refueling checklist. They began looking for the tanker on the horizon. Soon the two aircraft were 10 miles apart and closing. In just a matter of a minute or two, the KC-135's airframe was parallel with the C-5. Rolocut and Addabbo nudged the Galaxy closer. The boom operator on the tanker began extending the KC-135's signature fuel nozzle.

Airmanship got its test as Rolocut and Addabbo eased the Galaxy underneath the engines of the KC-135. Between 9 and 12 feet separated the two huge aircraft.

"Latched," the boom operator called out. The hook-up was confirmed by a firm thump which rumbled the cockpit. A long tube with JP-8 fuel flowing through it held the two aircraft together over New England.

(continued on next page)



The C-5 eases up to the awaiting KC-135R Stratotanker, flown by the New Hampshire Air National Guard of Pease ANGB, N.H.

Refueling... (Cont. from front)

Addabbo coached Rolocut. Riley said this was a practice offload of fuel. "For practice you just get a token (offload)," he said. "Less than a thousand pounds."

The pilots watched intently ahead. They maneuvered the throttles while maintaining stability with a gentle wake and bump in the air from the KC-135 in front. "Very nice, Rolo," a crew member said to Rolocut on the intercom; a compliment meant in its entirety. All things considered it was remarkable, though routine, with what this training mission involved thousands of feet above the clouds. "There are three-quarters of a million pounds of aircraft moving along here," Addabbo said.

Maj. Tom Maurer was the fourth pilot on board for the mission. The pilots rotated through the left seat for a crack at the few minutes connected to the 290,000-pound Stratotanker, just 20 feet away in the sky. Each time someone else moved into the left seat, Addabbo confirmed the C-5 always was in control of the crew. "Co-pilot's airplane," he announced on the intercom.

Turbulence plays a big role in deciding whether air refueling can happen, Riley said. "We're not allowed to do this in moderate turbulence, and it's difficult in light turbulence."

The KC-135 steadily led the way, its boom extended as the two big planes went into a turn in formation. This was precision flying at its best.

"You guys are good," Addabbo told the Pease tanker crew. "Thanks for all of the work tonight."

Flight engineers MSgt. Bruce Szepek and TSgt. Chris McCurdy kept their eyes on making sure the C-5 was going where it was supposed to.

With the air refueling completed, the Galaxy descended through the clouds back to Westover. Rolocut ran through checklists and eased the throttles of the aircraft. The runway soon appeared in the dark like a huge lit up rectangle.

Rolocut eased the C-5 smoothly down

onto the wet runway. The power of the thrust reversers shook the aircraft. Once the aircraft reached its parking spot, maintainers quickly swarmed to inspect it.

His favorite part of flying the C-5 is its long range. "I like to travel around the world," he said. Rolocut looks forward to when the C-5s get their scheduled engine and avionics modifications. "Then it'll be really interesting to fly," he said. "We'll have a lot more thrust and more fuel efficiency. I hope it happens before I retire. I think four next year are getting done. That's the start of the process. I'll be around awhile."

Sixth Marines return for quick turnaround

by MSgt Tom Allocco

Members of the Sixth Marines, 2nd Marine Division, Camp Lejeune, N.C., recently passed through the Westover Passenger Terminal as one stop on a long road from the Mediterranean to Iraq to Okinawa. The Marines, just home from Iraqi Freedom, are already planning to deploy to Okinawa for three months.

The Sixth Marines, members of a regiment which was formed just in time to gain battle honors at Belleau Wood in 1918, provided security at a base camp near Iraq. When the war started, they set up a prisoner of war camp.

The camp stayed mostly empty, when the Iraqi military dissolved and went home, one of the Marines said. Many of the Iraqis threw down their weapons and took off their uniforms rather than fight, he said.

The Marines' last duty was guarding an airfield about 30 miles from Baghdad.

The Marines went to the Iraqi Freedom AOR only a few months after coming home from a "Med Float", a deployment on ships to the Mediterranean Sea in 2002. They are now planning to be at home only until August, when they will go Okinawa for three months of training.

Express-ions

Westover Star



—photo by SSgt. Andrew Biscoe

Bronze Star recipient Maj. Timothy S. Donnelly, Chief of Force Protection, 439th SFS, with his wife, Jane, and daughter, Laura, at the June 7 Commander's Call. He earned the award for a tour of duty in Afghanistan from January to July 2002. This is the first time in 10 years a Westover reservist has earned the Bronze Star.

Movie tickets on sale

Westover Four Seasons is selling discounted movie tickets for \$7 which can be used at area Showcase Cinema Theaters.

The tickets are on sale in the gym. For more information, call Larry Helmer at Four Seasons at Ext. 2974.

Pat Stats

Served since Feb. 2, 2003

7,254 passengers -- 2,432 aircraft
27,258,653 pounds of cargo
Info from MSgt. Jim Garrity, 42APS

Meals

14,502 hot meals served
Box lunches: 5,020
Info from MSgt. David Beauregard, 439SVS

Fuel since Feb. 1
16,353,825 gallons of JP-8
Info from Jim Maloney, Fuels

PATRIOT express

(EDITOR'S NOTE: Security guidelines prohibit using deploying reservist's last names)

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